1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

During the half century of historical silence from 1844 forward, and pending the progress of the desultory researches, the Seri suffered a succession of external shocks more serious in their internal effects than any of those of the three centuries preceding; indeed it is just to say that during this half century the Seri range was curtailed, the Seri customs were modified, and the Seri population was diminished more effectively than during the preceding sesquicentury of fairly definite record. The chief factor in this transformation was an intrepid pioneer, who pushed actual settlement toward the Seri frontier more vigorously than any predecessor—Señor Pascual Encinas, a son of Sonora.[1]

Born near Hermosillo in 1819, Don Pascual was in early maturity at the time of Colonel Andrade's expedition, and was fully conversant with the later history of the Seri. Of adventurous disposition, and holding interests in Bacuachito, he was familiar with the Seri frontier; and in hunting deer and other large game over the vast delta plain of Rio Sonora he had perceived the agricultural possibilities of the region. During the struggle of 1844 he became impressed with the idea that the Seri might be controlled and gradually inducted into useful citizenship through a judicious combination of industrial, educational, and evangelical agencies; and before the end of the year he began the establishment of a rancho (the present Rancho San Francisco de Costa Rica) on the Seri borderland, with the double object of developing new resources and regulating the relations between tribesmen and settlers. Enlisting the aid of a corps of vaqueros, mechanics, and farmers, he excavated a deep well, erected corrals and adobe houses, cleared away the exceptionally luxuriant mesquite forests, fenced fields, and stocked the plains with horses, burros, and cattle. At the same time he sought Seri wanderers and treated them with such kindness and firmness as to gain their confidence; and while most of the tribe held aloof, some attached themselves to the rancho, and a few even were taught to labor, albeit in desultory fashion. In this stage, as for some years afterward, he was materially aided by his contemporary, Kolusio, then in his physical prime and still in good repute among his kinsmen. Meantime he obtained the assignment of two priests, who made it their chief duty still further to placate the tribesmen and their families and to induct them into religious observances and belief; and as the confidence of the Indians increased, he had two boys domiciled in the rancho and educated in the Spanish as well as in the faith, in the hope that they might pass into priesthood and so form a future bond with their kin. One of these neophytes disappeared in the troublous times of a later decade, though tradition indicates that he became a tribal outcast (like Kolusio still later) and slunk away to Pitiquito and Altar, and afterward to California; the other, christened Juan Estorga and

[1] The following paragraphs are condensed from oral recitals by Señor Encinas (a notably straightforward and judicious authority), supplemented and corroborated in all essential details by Señores Andres Noriega, Ygnacio Lozanio, and several other habitués of the Seri borderland, as well as by Kolusio and Mashém, several Papago informants, and various collateral documents.

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

+175 648 [797]

nicknamed El Gran Pelado ("The Great Shorn"), survives as subchief Mashém, long since relapsed into his native savagery, save that he remembers the Spanish, affects a hat, cuts his hair to the neck (whence his nickname), and prefers footgear to the fashion of his fellows.

Industrially, Don Pascual's venture proved successful; the fertile soil, periodically watered from below by the underflow of the semi-annual freshets, yielded incredible crops; reveling in the exceptional floral wealth of the delta and tided over bad seasons by the artificial forage, the stock increased and multiplied beyond precedent; and so the rancho became a flourishing establishment, housing a score or more of families and harboring a hundred or two dependents, in addition to the thousands of half-wild horses and cattle. Meantime, the industrial lines ramifying from the rancho formed a drag net for Seri raiders, practically cutting off forays eastward toward Hermosillo and Horcasitas, and greatly reducing the sallies southeastward toward Guaymas and northeastward toward Bacuachito and Caborca; and Don Pascual began to receive recognition and state and federal concessions as a public benefactor. For a decade the industrial and evangelical influence and the effect of the bold kindness of El Patron extended and became felt throughout the tribe, and most of the families visited the rancho at least occasionally. Yet even the best of them remained averse to labor save in sporadic spurts, and indifferent to the religious teaching, save when sweetened by substantial largess; while all but the decrepit and the two carefully restrained neophytes came and went capriciously, and were much given to decamping incontinently by night to return shamefacedly one by one in the course of a week or two, without consistent or adequate excuse for their stampede—indeed the vaqueros habitually classed these nocturnal flights of the Seri and the reasonless stampedes of their stock in the same category. Ostensibly a few of the larger boys and girls and a still smaller number of the adults were helpers about the rancho; actually they were scavengers, consuming the waste of the shambles and the earth-mixed scatterings from the thrashing floors, and saving the rancheros the noisome duty of removing the carcasses of animals dead by disease or accident; and as their indolence increased under the easy régime, they grew into more and more open thievery. By no means deficient in shrewdness and cunning, they adopted numberless devices for imposing on the credulity of the majordomo and other officials of the rancho. When coin-like tokens of stamped copper were used in the transactions of the rancho as equivalents of labor, the Seri ingeniously obtained sheet copper by stealth or barter, systematically counterfeited the tokens, and exchanged them for supplies at the rancho store; it was a favorite trick to surreptitiously break the neck or a leg of a horse, cow, or burro, and report finding the dead or crippled animal, at the same time begging for the carcass; and, whenever opportunity offered, they slyly slaughtered a head of stock, consumed it to the hoofs and horns

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

the Seri are absolutely without extratribal affiliations, or even sympathy. When the chronicles of three centuries are scanned in the light of recent knowledge, it seems practically certain that they have been equally isolated since the dawn of Caucasian history in Mexico; and both recent data and the chronicles combine with the principles of demotic development to indicate that the Seri have stood alone from the beginning of their tribal career, and have never foregathered with the neighboring tribes of distinct blood, distinct arts and industries, distinct organization, distinct language, and distinct thought and feeling.

The present isolation of the Seri throws light on their early history and reveals the extent of the misapprehension of the pioneer missionaries, who half deluded themselves and wholly deluded distant readers into the notion that the Seri were really proselyted and actually collected in the mission adjuncts of military posts established to protect settlers against forays of the tribe; for, as illumined by later and fuller knowledge of the tribal characteristics, the chronicles are seen to indicate merely that a few captives, malingerers, cripples, spies, and tribal outcasts were harbored at the missions until death and occasional escapes brought the colonies to a natural end, with no real assimilation of blood or culture on either side. So, too, the persistent tribal antipathy reveals the error of confounding the independent or even inimically related outbreaks of the Seri and of the Pima or Apache with the concerted action of confederated tribes. Doubtless the ever-watchful spies from Tiburon habitually gave notice of the disturbance due to outbreaks of contemporary tribes, just as they do today when the local soldiery are withdrawn for duty on the Yaqui frontier; naturally the civil and military authorities were thereby led to provide for protection against the Seri and Pima, against the Seri and Pima, or against the Seri and Apache at each period of disturbance, just as they provided against the Seri between periods; and it would appear that this association in thought and speech led to the unconscious magnification, in the minds of the chroniclers, of a supposed alliance.

In brief, the tribal relations of the Seri seem always to have been antipathetic, especially toward the aboriginal tribes of alien blood, in somewhat less measure toward Caucasians, and in least—yet still considerable—degree toward their own collinguals and (presumptive) consanguineals.

POPULATION

So far as could be ascertained by inquiries of and through Mashém in 1894, the Seri tribe then comprised about 60 or 70 warriors, with between three and four times as many women and children—i. e., the population was apparently between 250 and 350. The group of about 60 (including 17 warriors) seen at Costa Rica was evidently growing rapidly, to judge from the proportion of youths of both sexes, infants in arms, and pregnant women; and there are other indications that

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

impaired than their fear-born veneration evaporated, and their native antipathy reappeared in original virulence. The 1894 party was fortunate in successfully treating a sick wife of sub-chief Mashóm, and subsequently spent days in the rancheria, distributing gifts to old and young in a manner unprecedented in their experience and making liberal exchanges for such small possessions as they wished to spare; yet, with a single possible exception, they succeeded in bringing no more human expression to any Seri face or eye than curiosity, avidity for food, studied indifference, and shrouded or snarling disgust. Among themselves they were fairly cheerful, and the families were unobtrusively affectionate; yet the cheerfulness was always chilled and often banished by the approach of an alien. The Sonorenses generally hold the Seri in indescribably deep dread as uncanny and savage monsters lying beyond the human pale; while the reciprocal feeling on the part of the Seri toward Caucasians, and still more toward Indian aliens, seems akin to that of the average man toward the rattlesnake, which he flees or slays without pause for thought—it seems nothing less than intuitive and involuntary loathing. The Seri antipathy is at once deepened into an obsession and crystallized into a cult; the highest virtue in their calendar is the shedding of alien blood; and their normal impulse on meeting an alien is to kill unless deterred by fear, to flee if the way is clear, and to fawn treacherously for better opportunity if neither natural course lies open.

Concordantly with their primary characteristic, the Seri have avoided ethnic and demotic union beyond the narrow limits of their own kindred; and even of these they seem to have cast out parts, annihilating the Guayma and Upanguayma, displacing and nearly destroying the Tepoka, and outlawing individuals and (apparently) small groups. The earlier chronicles indicate that the Jesuit missionaries, and after them the Franciscan friars and the secular officials, sought to scatter the tribe by both cajolery and coercion, and endeavored to divide families by restraint of women and children and by banishment of wives; there are loose traditions, too, of the capture and enslavement of Indian and Caucasian women in Seriland; yet the great fact remains that not a single mixed-blood Seri is known to exist, and that no more than two of the blood (Kolusio and perhaps one other) now live voluntarily beyond the territorial and consanguineal confines of the tribe. The romantic story of a white slave and ancestress of a Seri clan, sometimes diffused through pernicious reportorial activity, is without shadow of proof or probability; the tradition of the captivity of a Papago belle was corroborated, albeit indefinitely, by Mashóm's naïve admission that an alien woman was once kept as a slave to a childless death due to her inaptitude for long wanderings; and there is not a single known fact indicating even so much as miscibility of the Seri blood with that of other varieties of the genus *Homo*. Naturally the presumption of miscibility holds in the absence of direct evidence; yet the presumption

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930) 1931 NU31 Seri NU31

SERIAN TERRITORY AND TRIBES

The close speech unity of the Seri, Tepoca, Salineros, Guaymas, and Upanguaymas is affirmed by all the older authors. The name Seri has however been used in several senses, even in pre-ethnologic days: (1), for the entire group of related tribes, sometimes excluding and sometimes including the Guaymas; (2), for the inhabitants of Tiburon Island and the immediately opposite stretch of mainland; (3), for the inlanders more or less associated with the mission establishments from Hermosillo upstream, in contrast with the "Tiburones" of the island; (4), for the modern fusion of mainlanders and islanders, which evidently includes descendants of all Serian tribes except the Guaymas and Upanguaymas, who became absorbed in the lowermost Yaqui tribe or village of Belem. It is in this fourth and last sense that I use the term; my principal informant, in the tradition given, employed the third meaning; McGee mostly the second, with a strong implication of the thorough apartness and greater primitiveness of the islanders, as compared with their ethnic kinsmen.

The Tastioteños of my informant appear not to be known otherwise. The coastwise alignment of tribes from south to north seems to have been: Guaymas, Upanguaymas, Tastioteño, Seri or Tiburones, Tepoca, Salinero.

As already mentioned in the Introduction, it seems inherently unlikely that Serian territory extended as far up the Sonora river as Ures, near which Orozco y Berra puts the boundary. His undue extension is probably due to the fact that the missions to which Serians (other than Guaymas-Upanguaymas) became attached, were situated in the valley of the Opodepe or Horcasitas branch of the Sonora. According to McGee[10] these Missions were: Santa Magdalena de Tepoca, founded in 1699, soon abandoned, location long lost but probably up-stream from next; Nacameri, 7 leagues below Opodepe; Nuestra Señora del Pópulo, 9 leagues down, at Horcasitas; Nuestra Señora de los Angeles, 3-4 leagues down, maintained, with preceding, until 1767; Pitic or Pueblo de los Seris, more than 12 leagues down (opposite Hermosillo), founded last, in 1742. Nacameri and Pitic sound like Pima, not Seri, words. Whether the river valleys from Hermosillo up were actually Pima territory, as here surmised, will have to be established from documentary sources, possibly supplemented by recollections of the Pima surviving about Ures. It is conceivable that Serian tribes had driven the Pima out of the Sonora valley shortly before the founding of the missions, thus effectuating the division into Pima Bajos and Altos; or that the Pima shrinkage out of the middle of their territory began after their mis-

[10] Pp. 66, 69, 70, 72.

3:Davis & Dawson E-5 (1922-1940) 1945
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THE SAVAGE SERIS OF SONORA—II*

By EDWARD H. DAVIS AND R. YALE DAWSON

The beginning of Seri wars was the year 1700 during which they first conducted nocturnal raids on some of the most outlying of the Jesuit mission pueblos of Sonora, killing inhabitants with their arrows and stealing the cattle and horses. Year after year, the gradual expansion of Sonoran settlements and their nearer approach to the borders of the Seri homeland aggravated the conditions of conflict. The vigorous proselyting expeditions of the Jesuit missionaries brought about the capture of some hundred women, children, cripples and vieillards of the Seris, and concurrently the death of many defending warriors. These expeditions further kindled the hatred of the free Seri against the white man, while the few score "converts" gathered about the several missions gained a shocking character for sloth, filth, thievery, treachery, obstinacy and drunkenness. Raids upon the settlements continued and between 1757 and 1763 4.000 mules, mares and horses were known to have been stolen and eaten.

[p. 261(B)] [text continues on p. 262(A)]

Section V

The Seri Indian

Unfinished Book Manuscript

War Chief of the Seris

The Pelican Skin Robe

175 131 *Three centuries ago they were a friendly people living along the banks of the Sonora River from Hermosillo to where the flow of water sinks into the marshy banks along the coast of the Gulf of California.*

175 • 717 *The great Padre of the Pimas, Eusebio Francisco Kino, first visited the Seris in 1685, and found them "a very gentle people." After a short preachment to them he noted that "With very great insistency they begged me to remain with them and baptize them saying they would give me horses, fish and many products of the country, and that they would build me a house and a church. On three different days I said Mass in their country."*

The Padre could not remain but two years later (1687), he sent Father Adan Lily to them. Lily established a mission---Santa Maria del Populo---on the banks of the River near what is now Hermosillo. The Seris remained faithful to the Padres when the whole country rose in revolt some years later.

175 [134] *The withering hand of time worked against them, however. They were pushed farther and farther down onto the barren lands along the gulf coast until, finally, in a fierce and desperate retreat out into the sea and onto the desert Island of Tiburon. The swift and deadly channel between the Island and the Sonoran mainland gave them protection. They retrogressed through the centuries into a fierce and, perhaps, cannibalistic tribe.*

114 [123] *As late as 1922, when Edward Davis first visited Tiburon Island, a man was putting his life on the line when he stepped on the Island. But perhaps the quality of the man had something to do with it. As did Father Kino, Edward Davis was able to make friends of them.*

The following manuscript is an incompleted book on the Seris which was found among his papers.

[pp. 6-138 not processed]